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Library of Michigan
Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)
Five Year State Plan Evaluation
October 1, 1997-September 30, 2002
Final Report
February 27, 2002

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Background
LSTA

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is contained within the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996. The LSTA is a Federal grant program administered by the U. S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), (http://www. imls. gov) , via the state library agencies. LSTA replaced the Federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) , first created in 1956. Both programs were designed to provide Federal aid to libraries through a state grant program. With LSTA, emphasis was shifted to the development of library services that could take advantage of the emerging technologies that were impacting libraries and their communities.

After its passage, LSTA required that each state create a five-year plan for use as a blueprint for documenting how the LSTA funds would be spent in that state. The Library of Michigan began a review, evaluation, and refocusing effort in 1995, based on the results of planning efforts at both the state and national level. This was a comprehensive process to involve libraries and library users in the development of a five-year plan for LSTA. This process included a review of the existing and potential avenues available to all libraries and library users to assist in assessing needs, defining program priorities and evaluation progress.

The culmination of these efforts resulted in the *Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year State Plan for Michigan, October 1, 1997-September 30, 2002.* In this document, LSTA goals for Michigan were articulated as follows:

LSTA Goals for Michigan
GOAL I: To develop and fund LSTA programs in support of statewide access to the widest possible range of information for all residents of the state through all types of libraries.
GOAL II: To increase equity of information access by providing special assistance to areas of the state where library services are inadequate (under-served rural and urban communities) , and to libraries that are working to provide service to persons having difficulty using a library.
GOAL III: To support the continued development of information skills through continuing education on a collaborative basis statewide.
GOAL IV: To foster innovation and technical improvements in information services by funding leading edge projects in libraries which will serve as models and training centers.

The Library Services and Technology Act requires each State to independently evaluate and report on the activities undertaken prior to the end of the 5 year plan. The purpose of the evaluation is to show what difference LSTA State funding has made in meeting the needs identified in the 5 year plan.

Library of Michigan
The Library of Michigan is the official state library agency for Michigan. The primary mission and purpose of the Library of Michigan is to promote, advocate and consistently work to achieve the highest level of library service to the State of Michigan and its residents.

In reflecting on this mission, there is a natural and compelling role for the Library of Michigan in the administration of the LSTA program. LSTA, in effect, offers the Library of Michigan an additional tool to further enable the Library of Michigan to accomplish its mission with libraries throughout the state.

Situation
The Library of Michigan sought an independent consultant to perform a comprehensive evaluation of its LSTA Five-Year State Plan for Michigan. The evaluation will assess the impact the expenditure of LSTA funds has had on the Michigan library community. The results of the evaluation study will also provide diagnostics and recommendations relating to the development of the next Five-Year State Plan.

Tthe WJSchroer Company was hired to conduct the evaluation as a result of a competitive bid process.

Study Methodology and Data Collection Techniques
WJSchroer recommended the use of a combination of qualitative, quantitative and written analytical review of submitted documents and data spreadsheets to provide the information needed for the evaluation and findings. Implemented sequentially, qualitative research serves as a guide and framework for essential elements of information to be independently validated through quantitative research.

The qualitative research is followed by quantitative which serves to validate and either confirm or deny information gathered in the qualitative area. Quantitative research also provides more detail and segmentation of data through analytical techniques such as crosstab and correlations. Following quantitative is the analysis of submitted documents and spreadsheets.

The document review allows for a review of sample materials "under the microscope". This provides the ability to demonstrate observations with very specific documented information, but also allows for the (limited) understanding of patterns and trends noted in the application format.
Qualitative

Qualitative research provides a leading edge understanding of issues within a given environment. This method is open-ended enough to not only identify anticipated issues, problems and opportunities but allows for the discovery of elements within the environment that are relevant but which may not have been identified beforehand. The qualitative research tool recommended was the use of focus group discussion sessions. The proposal included conducting groups with randomly selected library staff who were familiar with the LSTA program from all eligible libraries within the State. Library staff would be pre-screened to verify their familiarity and experience with LSTA to comment meaningfully on the functioning of the program. Focus groups were to be conducted regionally around the State.

Due to a fortuitous sister research project occurring simultaneously (Library of Michigan PR Action Team), focus groups for both projects were scheduled together allowing for a more diverse set of locations for the conduct of the groups for both projects.

The evaluator team conducted six focus groups with two (2) each in Eastern Michigan, Western Michigan, and Northern Michigan areas respectively. Sites included Flint, Southfield, Grand Rapids, Traverse City, Paw Paw and Escanaba. These six focus groups included 6-10 participants in each group from all types of libraries within that geographical area.

The selection of the focus group participants was via random selection of library staff through data provided by the Library of Michigan. The participants were recruited to specific group sessions according to their geographic area. The Discussion guide was developed by WJS in consultation with Library of Michigan staff to confirm all necessary issues were included. The research probed for examples of program successes on which to build the second 5 year plan. The research also probed for issues such as what features are most valued, what problems the librarians are encountering with LSTA program implementation, and what aspects of service can be improved. These qualitative insights helped guide the design of the quantitative survey.

Quantitative
A quantitative survey using random contact telephone surveys of knowledgeable library staff from all eligible libraries around the State followed. This method is highly projectible, and provides a scientifically supported set of conclusions and findings based on a randomly selected sample of a representative set of respondents within the universe of all library staff.

While a total of 387 completed interviews was initially projected, 253 interviews were finally completed. The reason for the discrepancy was an unanticipated level of library staff unable to complete the interview due to a lack of knowledge or experience with the LSTA program. (Of 796 disqualified respondents, most were disqualified due to a lack of familiarity with LSTA).

While the 253 completed interviews are fewer than anticipated, there has not been a

significant change in the overall confidence interval of the survey. Confidence intervals of specific sub-groups interviewed (i. e. staff of academic or school libraries) have been significantly reduced and some findings will be noted as directional only.

Document review

The evaluator team selected five different libraries from different parts of the State. Each library has submitted multiple applications (over a period of several years) to the LSTA program for funding. The libraries were divided as follows:

< Two libraries have a strong track record of success with consistent approvals across all applications.
< Two libraries have a mixed record of some successes and some rejections.
< One library has a consistent record of failure with no successes in spite of multiple attempts.

The review looked at the various component parts of the application document to compare and contrast the successful, mixed and unsuccessful applications. The goal was to identify specific techniques, patterns or practices which appeared to signal success or failure.

Upon identification, demonstrate which practices appear intrinsic to the approach of the applicant and which could be recognized as elements which might be emulated or taught (positive elements) in workshops or identified as a negative along with demonstrations on alternative approaches on how to avoid these practices.

Upon completion of all three different measurement and evaluation methods, findings are summarized, then compared and patterns identified. All findings are reviewed against the specific objectives of the proposal and significant and relevant findings are included in the overall findings and recommendations of the study.

The spreadsheet review is an analysis of the full spectrum of grant applications over the five year period reduced down to a spreadsheet matrix. This allows for quick summarization of key numbers, granting level percentages, types of projects approved vs. denied, and other information based on a side-by-side comparison of the information contained in the spreadsheet.

Summary

The summary report takes findings and conclusions from each of the different component parts of the project and looks at overlap, inconsistencies, reinforcing data and how one set of findings adds to or complements another.

Based on the confluence of these findings, an overall set of conclusions and findings is presented along with a set of suggested recommendations and next steps for the organization to consider.

Data Analysis
Preface
As outlined in the Methodology (above) this Evaluation is constructed on the findings of several interdependent research studies. These studies were designed to be implemented separately but with results to be merged into a comprehensive 360 degree view of the performance of the Library of Michigan in its administration of the LSTA program. The qualitative, quantitative and document analysis studies each provide a perspective on the seven deliverables as outlined in the RFP. Each study stands alone as a complete body of work with its own method, sampling frame, findings and recommendations. In the Final Report, those findings are overlaid and nested with each other to provide corroboration, enriched detail and/or additional depth on what the other studies contribute.

The reader is invited to read the Management Summary and Recommendations from each of the independent studies: Focus Group Study, Telephone Survey, Document Analysis Survey. Elements of those summaries and recommendations are contained in the Final Report Summary and Recommendations outlined below. The Final Report goes beyond repeating those individual study findings to build a synergistic compilation of the individual study findings. These combined findings provide an enriched view of the LSTA environment and a multi-dimensional perspective on the deliverables. That perspective is the value-added synergy of the multiple studies merged. There are some findings which reflect new conclusions not found in any of the individual studies, but are developed from the confluence of the separate study data.

The approach used to address the deliverables is based on a presentation of the Final Combined Report Summary and Conclusions first. We then discuss the application and relevance to each of the findings as appropriate.
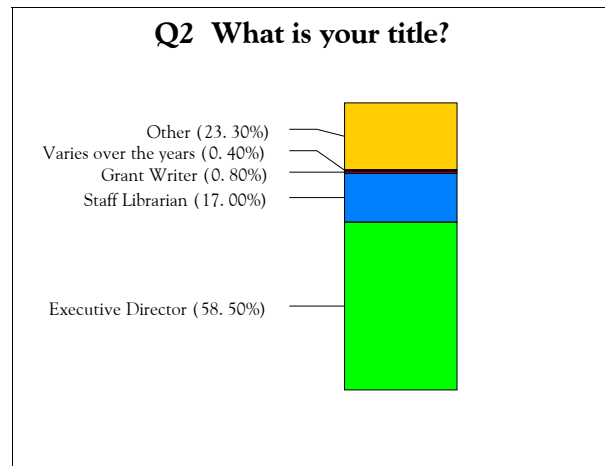
The evaluation team would like to express its appreciation to the Library of Michigan staff for their cooperation and support of our efforts. We especially would like to thank Sheryl Mase and Naomi Krefman for their efforts to keep us on track and supplied with the information we needed. We would also like to thank the respondents to the research and participants in the focus groups: library staff from around the state. They were most helpful, candid and interested in participating in the study. Participants were especially interested in this project both from a participation standpoint and from a results standpoint. Many wanted to know when the report would be published.

Data Analysis/Findings/Discussion
Combined Management Summary
Awareness/Participation

Respondents to the independent surveys (telephone and focus groups) tended to be Executive Directors (over 50%) of the different types of libraries surveyed. Additional titles of respondents include staff librarians and media specialists.

Q2 What is your title?

Other (23. 30%)
Varies over the years (0. 40%)
Grant Writer (0. 80%)
Staff Librarian (17. 00%)

Executive Director (58. 50%)

A criterion for participation involved awareness and working knowledge of the LSTA program. While overall awareness of the LSTA program was good, we were surprised to find lower than anticipated "knowledgeable" awareness of the program in many areas. The telephone survey "completed surveys" goal of 387 was reduced to 250 as it became apparent that many libraries had no one available who could respond to the survey questions or participate in the focus groups. (*Of 796 disqualified respondents to the telephone survey, most were disqualified due to lack of knowledge regarding the LSTA program.)*

An initial finding is an appreciation the awareness of LSTA and/ or experience with the LSTA program is very good, but not complete. About 2/ 3 of public libraries in the State appear to have someone knowledgeable on staff regarding LSTA. Among special, school and academic libraries the ratio is much lower. This limitation may impact on the LSTA participation as libraries without an awareness of the program or without staff experience with LSTA are less likely to compete for and win a LSTA grant.

Those respondents who are aware of LSTA generally have a very good awareness of the program, understand it evolved from LSCA and are aware of multiple goals for the program. Respondents in both the focus groups and telephone surveys were generally aware of no more than two of the LSTA primary goals.
The goals most often cited include:
>   <   "Stimulate innovation of technology"
>   <   "increase access in underserved areas" (Equity of Access)

Executive directors were more likely to be aware of the "statewide access" goal and larger libraries were more aware of the "equity of access" goal.

The limited awareness of all primary LSTA goals and identification of other goals not part of the LSTA goal set suggest some limitations on how well libraries throughout the State understand the LSTA program and goals set for it by the Library of Michigan.

**Q5 How many LSTA objectives can you identify?**
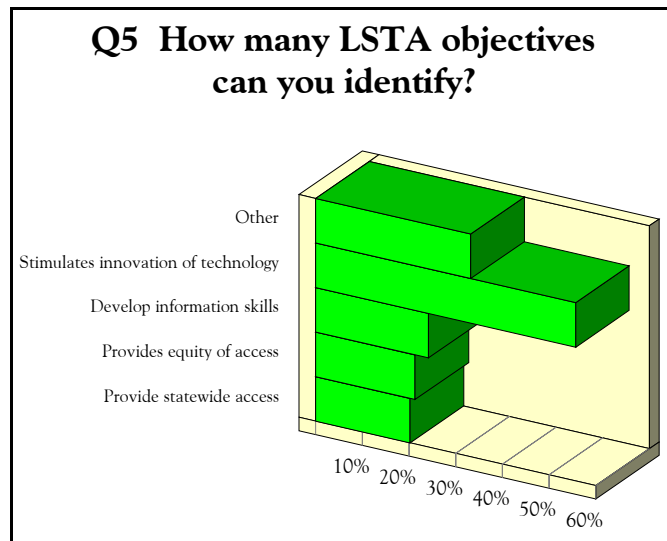
LSTA Goal Accomplishment

Accomplishment of four LSTA goals is somewhat mixed due to limited awareness (noted above) and differing views among focus group participants. In summary, focus group participants felt LSTA was achieving. . .

<   . . . generally good effectiveness on **statewide access** as a result of the "targeted programs" or AccessMichigan, along with some grants provided several years ago which were almost non-competitive which provided technology access to especially those libraries that had almost no technology at the time.

<   . . . **equity of access** was seen as being effectively achieved largely through non-competitive grants and targeted programs

<   . . . **developing information skills** received mixed reviews although seen as somewhat less effectively achieved with contributions from all three types of programs. . . but mostly targeted programs.

<   . . . **innovation** achieved through competitive grant programs although the issue of achievement of this goal sparked considerable discussion among the groups. Respondents were skeptical any real innovation was actually being created but the funding approved was mostly for good ideas already in circulation somewhere and slightly modified (if at all) for the submitting library's use.

**Q6 How effective has LSTA been in accomplishing it's goals?**

Extremely Effective
6
5
4
3
2
Extremely Ineffective

Mean 5. 63

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35%
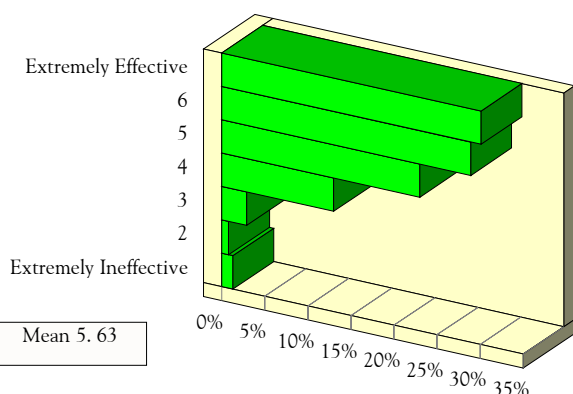
Focus group respondents went through a "dots" exercise and, overall, gave the highest marks to the "equity of access" and "statewide access". "Information skills development" was universally rated lowest in awareness and effectiveness by respondents.
In the Telephone Survey respondents awarded the Library of Michigan an average score of 5. 63 out of 7 possible points regarding how effective Library of Michigan is in accomplishing LSTA goals.

When asked "why", respondents talked about the positive things the LSTA program has provided including AccessMichigan, automation, bar coding, computer and internet access, etc. (See pp6- 10 in Verbatims- Telephone Survey).

Another indicator of the level of success achieved by the Library of Michigan relating to the technology threshold is evidenced by the growing number of library staff who would like to use LSTA funding for something other than technology.

This hypothesis was tested in the telephone survey and while the majority still support the technology focus of LSTA there is a sizeable and a growing minority (24%) which agreed with the statement ". . . the need for a

Q27 Need for "technology" funding has reached a point of diminishing returns

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree

5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45%

concentrated emphasis on the funding of technology is reaching a point of diminishing returns in. . . Michigan. "
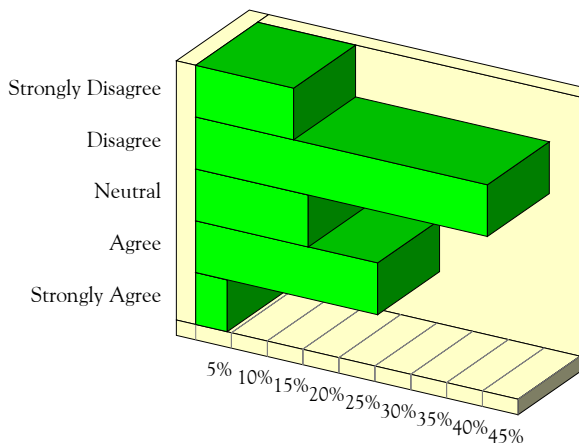
Evaluator's Grade:
Statewide Access= A-
Equity of Access= B
Develop Information Skills= C-
Stimulate Innovation and Technical Improvements= B
Overall= B+

Evaluator Comment: The overall score of B+ is awarded to the Library of Michigan because, as information gathered from the independent studies was analyzed, it became clear all four LSTA goals are not equally important. Five years ago, the clear priority for the State was the "statewide access" goal. Whether intentionally or not, the Library of Michigan appears to have concentrated its resources on that goal, largely achieving that goal and moving on to fund projects in support of the other goals.

It is largely our view that given limited resources the approach taken by the Library of Michigan is the best approach under the circumstances and, arguably, is the only approach which could have some level of success. Attempting to accomplish four major goals with limited resources and important developmental and infrastructure needs across the State of Michigan is probably not realistic and may have yielded mediocre results across all goals.

Satisfaction with LSTA program and Library of Michigan

Those respondents aware of the LSTA program are largely supportive of the program and complimentary regarding the Library of Michigan's administrative management of the program.   Sample comments received in the telephone survey include:

> *"..They have done very well in the advancement of technology."*
> *"They are working very hard to get AccessMichigan going and there is a lot more to do ,but LSTA is doing a good job."*
> *"In our area it helped us get an automated system, this would have not have happened as soon without the grant."*
> *"It is effective in assisting with technology services..."*
> *"I was able to automate and was never able to afford it on my own."*
> *"I believe that the use of LSTA funds acts great foresight... a bulk of funding in AccessMichigan has had a profound effect. It's much more local now and more libraries are aware of it."*

Respondents credit the LSTA program and Library of Michigan with AccessMichigan, a program widely endorsed within the library community.   Respondents also tend to credit the LSTA program with raising the level of technology in libraries throughout the State.

Respondents in both focus groups and telephone surveys believe technology programs funded by LSTA are widely in place and with few exceptions the level of technology available to libraries in the State has been dramatically effected. Focus group participants openly praised the program and the Library of Michigan administration without prompting. AccessMichigan was especially noted as being worthwhile. Participants also were complimentary regarding the value of the funds and the impact on technology levels in libraries across the State.
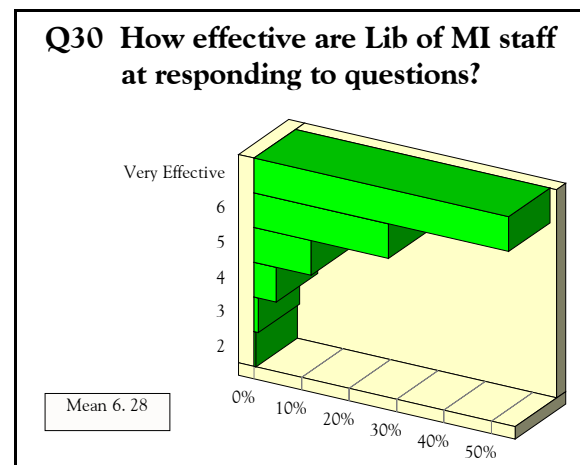
"I think it has funneled money into a lot of libraries."
"I think it has helped a lot of libraries and it has helped us."
"It has allowed libraries to achieve many objectives that they would not have been able to without it."
"It is a wonderful program."
"It is a good program because it helps funds innovative programs for the library"
"I know of libraries that have gotten funded and it has been a real life line for them."
I know of other districts that have gotten funds and it has made a big difference.
"They have done a lot for the Library's in Michigan."

Data collected throughout the studies noted the responsiveness and courtesy of Library of Michigan staff in answering questions, providing information and providing genuine helpfulness to library staff as they work on grant applications.

Overall, throughout the Focus group discussion sessions and in numerous questions in the Telephone Survey, respondents indicate a relatively high level of satisfaction with the Library of Michigan's administrative management of the LSTA program.
Evaluator Grade:
Participant satisfaction with LSTA Administration- B+

Q30 How effective are Lib of MI staff at responding to questions?

Very Effective

6
5
4
3
2

Mean 6. 28

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%

Statewide Programs (AccessMichigan/MEL/ATLAS)

AccessMichigan is a "virtual" library comprised of a selection of commercial electronic databases made available for statewide access along with hundreds of articles from magazines and newspapers in electronic format. MEL is an acronym standing for Michigan Electronic Library, a subject-based "launch pad" to Internet resources.

Slightly more than 45% of respondents were aware of the "statewide programs". However, most related statewide programs to AccessMichigan. While it appears there is generally good awareness and support of MEL, there is less awareness of ATLAS.

Respondents are extremely enthusiastic regarding the use of LSTA funds for AccessMichigan and MEL (considering those the primary "statewide programs") scoring the use of these funds at an average of 6. 54 out of 7. 0 on a scale rating "good use of funds" (Q. 9). This is consistent with the near universal support for this spending articulated by members of library staffs at focus groups when relating to this project.
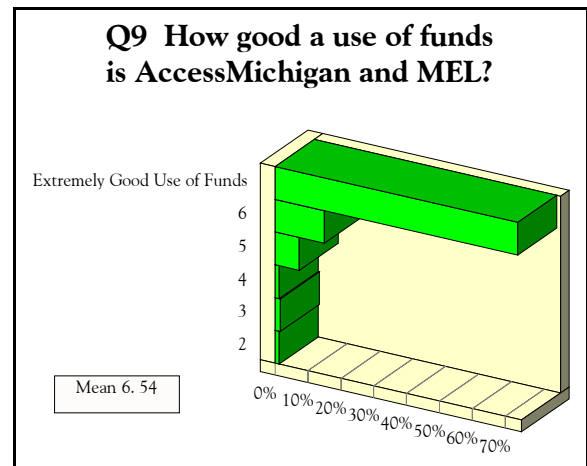
Further, respondents would rather retain AccessMichigan even if other grant programs were lost. 70% of respondents "agree or "strongly agree" with that statement (Q. 28). Other programs mentioned include MEL and ATLAS.
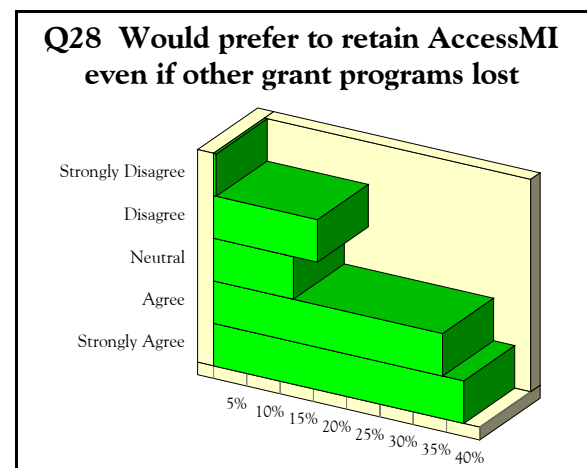
When AccessMichigan was discussed in Focus Groups, participants were challenged to explain the purpose of LSTA. When several participants acknowledged the program was designed to fund new technologies, the moderator asked whether AccessMichigan was a new technology and, if so, how long it would remain so. The implication to the question was that AccessMichigan couldn't permanently stay in the stable of LSTA as there would be no room for other "new" technologies. Participants in the Focus Groups became defensive and rejected that thought. Others said it didn't matter. . . they wanted to keep AccessMichigan where it was because other funding wasn't available.

Overall, library staff generally are highly resistant to the idea of losing AccessMichigan and several respondents in the focus groups engaged in levels of denial and evasiveness as the moderator attempted to continue to discuss the issue.
At another level, the question of who utilizes AccessMichigan was raised. . . between staff and customers. Was AccessMichigan a tool primarily used by staff?

The question was placed on the Telephone Survey. 10% of respondents indicated AccessMichigan is used 100% by staff. The plurality view is AccessMichigan is used more by staff than by customers. However, many also responded AccessMichigan was used "equally" be staff and customers.

Q40 What percentage of AccessMI is utilized by Staff/Consumers?
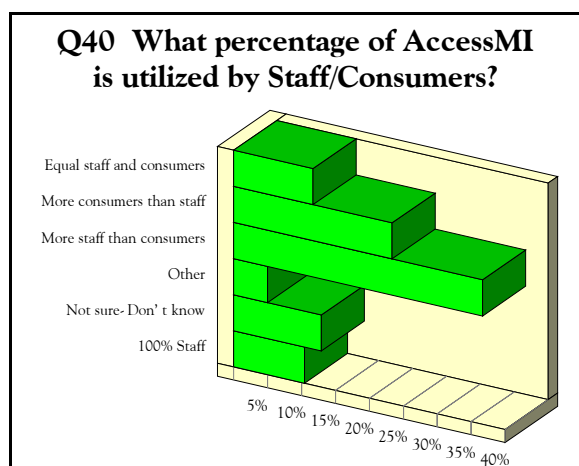
There was general agreement a lack of marketing support exists to build awareness of AccessMichigan. There is a disinclination on the part of library staff to take on the lead responsibility of marketing AccessMichigan to end users. Most respondents felt it was the Library of Michigan's responsibility to take the leadership role of providing materials and marketing support to build AccessMichigan awareness with consumers.

Evaluator Grade:
Development of AccessMichigan as a Statewide program- A
Administration of AccessMichigan-A
Preparation for AccessMichigan to be mainstreamed - C-
Marketing of AccessMichigan to end-users - D

Non-Competitive Grants

About 22% of respondents are aware of "non-competitive" grants such as the support to the Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. As this category of grant is being phased out, it was anticipated awareness of these grants would not be as high as awareness to the other categories of grants.   Awareness of other programs included children's programs, digitization, elderly, literacy, reaching minority populations and special projects.

There appears to be a consensus among Focus Group participants the Blind and Physically Handicapped grants are no longer needed for the most part and respondents feel these special populations are being served.   While more can always be done, there appeared to be no groundswell of opposition to the elimination of these grants.

One area of non-competitive program discussed in Focus Groups was the funding of ROCs (Regions of Cooperation) .   These regions of resource sharing between multi-type libraries have been effective particularly in the more rural and less populated areas. For some, the ROCs have provided significant assistance in grant preparation, interpretation of Library of Michigan or State of Michigan rules or findings, computer assistance and in other aspects of library management and development.

While the elimination of most non-competitive grants appears to be supported, there remains localized support for the ability to provide funding in support of ROCs where they may be of particular or unique value.

While this question may be a localized issue, the larger question emerges of providing support to small, rural libraries in their efforts to compete for grants, become trained in new technologies, and getting assistance for other technical, funding or library-business based issues. As will be noted later, under "Competitive Grant Programs", many small libraries are now receiving support from and/or having their regional cooperative complete much of the grant funding application for them.

Evaluator Grade:
Management of Non-Competitive Grants- B

Competitive Grants
Concept of Competitive Grants
The LSTA competitive grants offered by the Library of Michigan account for a plurality of spending and the single biggest impact of the LSTA program on many libraries individually. This is especially true now as the older non-competitive grants which were offered to all libraries to enable basic Internet access and computer acquisition (via the Gates Foundation) have largely disappeared.

Q8 What are the major programs used to distribute LSTA money to libraries?
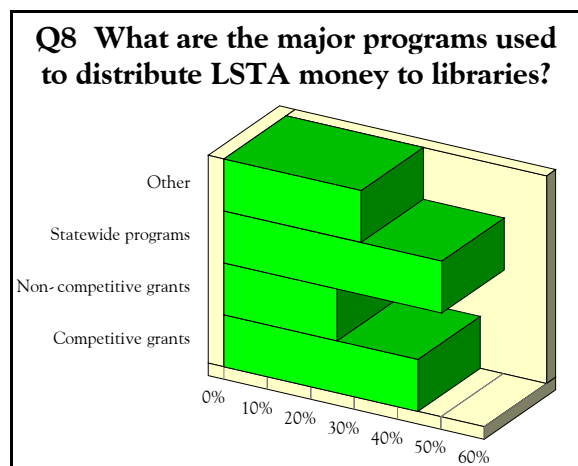
Competitive grant funding is the second largest of the three categories of LSTA Grant funding. Awards are offered in a number of funding categories. Libraries with an interest in developing a project in an appropriate category are invited to submit an application to receive funding in support of the project. Funding normally lasts for one year and the program must be planned far enough in advance to allow for not only the planning of the implementation to take place from 6-12 months from date of the award but an additional period of time after the implementation to receive the actual funding dollars.

In other words, libraries must "front" the money.

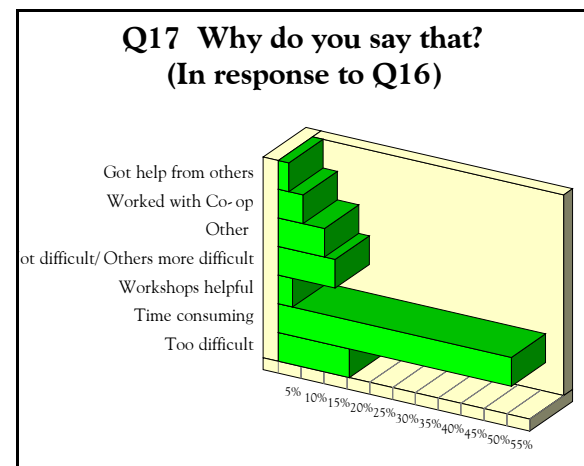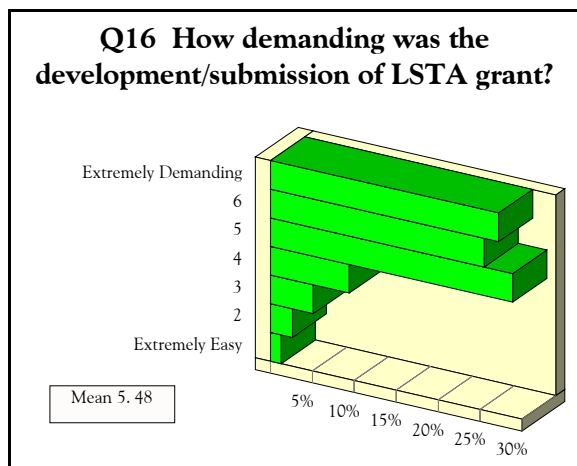Competitive grants present an approach/avoidance conflict for many of the library staff throughout the State.
The attraction to the grants is straightforward:
< the ability to acquire funding to do important library technology projects which otherwise would go wanting.
The "avoidance" component is twofold:
< Grant applications are considered time-consuming, detail-heavy, burdensome and boring tasks which require valuable staff resource time and often result in nothing.

<   The competitive grant process sets up an adversarial role of libraries in competition. This process pits libraries against each other. This has the *potential* of stimulating a culture of information hoarding, secrecy, idea development in isolation, and builds a bias against collaboration, openness
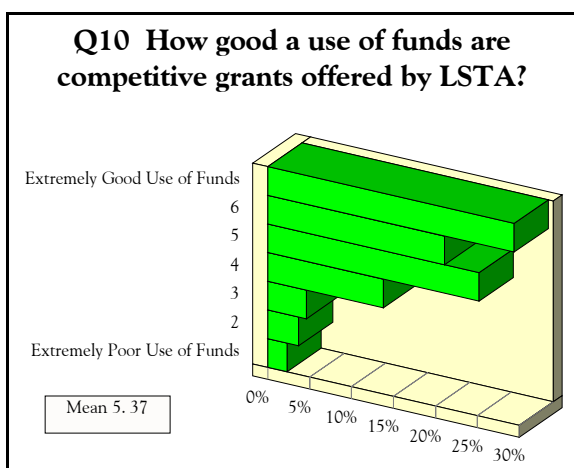
Q16 How demanding was the development/submission of LSTA grant?

Extremely Demanding
6
5
4
3
2
Extremely Easy

Mean 5. 48

5%   10%   15%   20%   25%   30%

Q17 Why do you say that? (In response to Q16)

Got help from others
Worked with Co- op
Other
ot difficult/ Others more difficult
Workshops helpful
Time consuming
Too difficult

5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50% 55%

s and communications.

At the end of the day, every library staff person knows if their grant is approved, someone else's is denied and vice- versa. It is a zero- sum game.

Largely, library staff appear to handle this potential problem well. Library staff recognize there is not enough money available to fund every project and some method of "winnowing" is necessary. Also, library people are, for the most part, it seems, committed professionals who are collegial and enjoy working with each other and participating in mutual learning and development. As a result, the most potentially negative aspects of the competitive process appear not to result in very destructive behavior among and between library staff.

Q10 How good a use of funds are competitive grants offered by LSTA?

Extremely Good Use of Funds
6
5
4
3
2
Extremely Poor Use of Funds

Mean 5. 37

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30%

Overall, library staff are very supportive of the competitive grant process, scoring 5. 37 out of 7. 0 of this process as a "good use of funds".

Small libraries are significantly more supportive (surprisingly) of competitive grants than large libraries. This seeming contradiction, given that small libraries are more concerned with the difficulty of the application process, may be explained by the lack of other options for funding. While larger libraries have other options for funding, smaller libraries often don't.

This puts smaller libraries in the position of supporting competitive grants, even though they are not pleased with the application process, if, for no other reason than the LSTA competitive grants are seen as the "only game in town".

In fact, library staff remain (again surprisingly) positive regarding the competitive grant process. In focus group discussions a majority of respondents claim the work of preparing the grant application is worth it (although they complain mightily about this same work) *...if they get the grant.*

Q18 Effort is justified by funding BY Q45 Class size of library

No

Yes

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Class 1 ■ Class 2 ■ Class 3 ■ Class 4 ■ Class 5 ■ Class 6

Some go on to explain how the process makes them think through their projects better and be better managers.
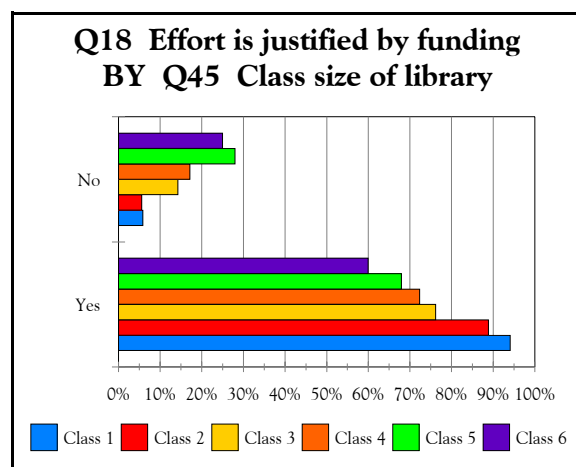
However, when pressed, respondents asked whether the competitive grant process was the best way to distribute funds, were unnerved. Respondents appeared somewhat confused by the question.

In the Telephone Survey, 60% agree with the statement "the competitive grant process is the best way to distribute funds". The concept of alternatives has not occurred and it appears there is a general consensus toward making the best of the existing situation.

When discussing historical funding practices many respondents recalled wistfully the non-competitive grants which provided internet access or a few computers. There was a "no-hassle" approach which. . . "allowed us all to win, get what we needed without jumping

through a million hoops".

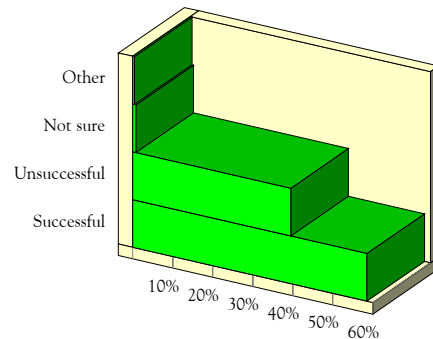## Competitive Grant Success Rates

While respondents overall report a 60% success rate for an LSTA grant. . . that is a cumulative figure. That means in essence that 60% of respondent libraries have been successful at one time or other over the past four years. (An analysis of the data from Library of Michigan shows the figure is actually 70%). This may be the result of one, multiple or many submissions of requests for funding.

More telling is the finding 1/3 of libraries have a 0-25% success rate while another 1/3 report a 25%-75% success rate.
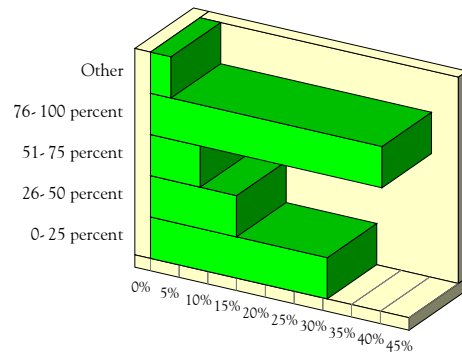
With additional review of the data, it appears that approximately ½ of all libraries participating are successful about ½ or less of the time.

Q13 Was your library successful or unsuccessful in receiving the grant?

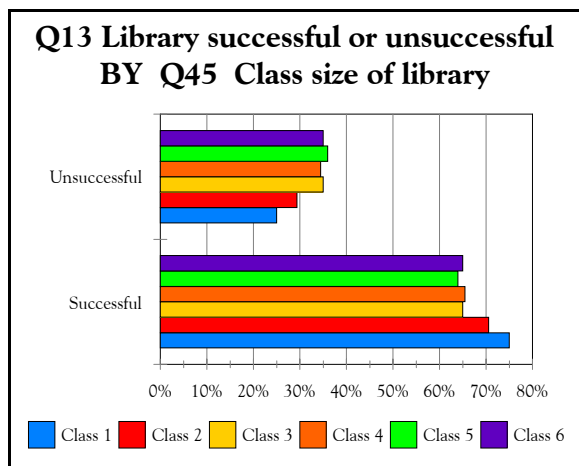**Q14 Percentage of success your library had with competitive grants**

Further study of the findings suggests the possibility the number of successful grantees is coming from a smaller group of libraries each year (see below).   This could mean while the number of grants is staying the same (or even growing) the actual pool of recipients is stable or declining. If so, this may mean a trend toward two types of libraries: successful LSTA grantees and unsuccessful LSTA grantees and/or non-applicants. To put it another way: winners and losers.
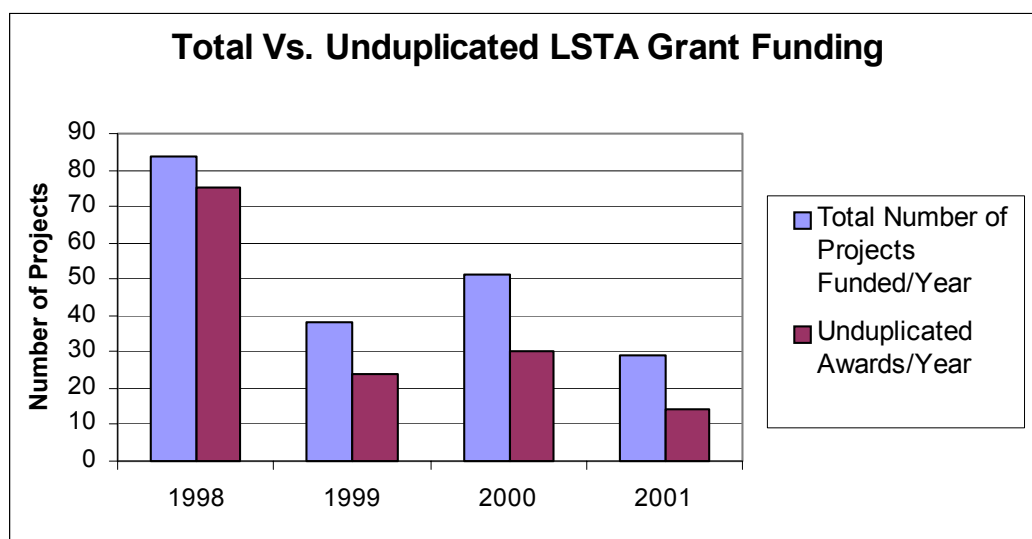
Q13 Library successful or unsuccessful BY Q45 Class size of library

Legend: Class 1, Class 2, Class 3, Class 4, Class 5, Class 6

The number of unduplicated winners in the competition is less than 50% in two of the four years tracked.   (This means that more than ½ of the time grants are being awarded to libraries who have previously been awarded a LSTA grant.) The total unduplicated number of grantees is 143 out of 202 (71%) over four years.   That looks acceptable until one recognizes that 153 out of the 269 grants were awarded to libraries which have received multiple grants. In effect, 57% of grants go to multiple award winners. This suggests that first time competitors or those who have never been awarded a grant have an uphill fight. For those who have been successful, they are more likely to be successful again. . . making the effort much more worthwhile for them and much more frustrating for those who do not make the cut the first time.

It should not come as a surprise therefore, that success rate of the grantee **does** have an impact on the grantees' view of the world, or at least the Library of Michigan and the LSTA program. Those respondents who are unsuccessful as grant applicants rate the LSTA program significantly less favorably than those who are successful grant applica

Total Vs. Unduplicated LSTA Grant Funding

nts.

As may be anticipated (given school libraries relatively recent inclusion in LSTA funding), school libraries report the lowest success rate (½ have a 0-25% success rate) and public along with special libraries have the highest success rate. Perhaps surprisingly, (although a welcome surprise) small libraries do as well from a success ratio standpoint as large libraries.

Special Populations
The Library of Michigan is making efforts to support its special population grant requests. More than 50% (on average) of special population grant requests (Children in Poverty, Persons Having Difficulty Using a Library and Internet Training Center Enhancements) are approved. This compares with approximately 35-40% of other types of grant requests. Overall, as a percent of all grant dollars funded, special populations make up approximately 41% of the total dollars allocated for competitive grants. (12% Children, 15% Internet Training Center, and 14% Persons Having Difficulty Using the Internet. (See Attachments A and B,).

On an index basis, Internet Training Centers, Children in Poverty, and Persons having difficulty using the Internet are the three highest index program grant recipients (152, 137, 139) (Attachment E)

While this program emphasis demonstrates Library of Michigan commitment to Special Populations, there is a danger libraries which recognize this emphasis may concentrate their applications in these "high success rate" funding areas. In the process their application may be modified to appear to qualify but is really designed for other purposes. While "creative writing" in grant applications is always a problem, the tendency could be exacerbated when certain funding areas have twice the probability of being funded as others.

In the Document Review portion of the evaluation, there is some evidence of certain libraries concentrating their applications in these "high success" areas.
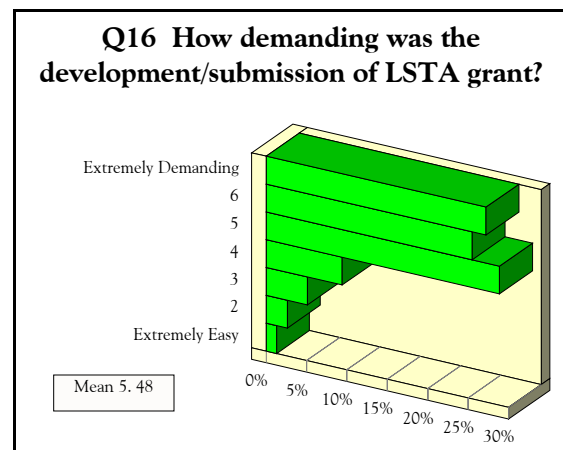**Evaluator Grade:**
Management of Grant Approval Process- C

Competitive Grant Process
The single biggest complaint regarding all of the LSTA program is the completion of grant applications is too complicated/difficult/time consuming and bureaucratic.
This issue was widely discussed in the focus groups and respondents were in many cases

angry, frustrated and cynical regarding the application process. Some respondents felt the process was made intentionally difficult and complicated to dissuade applicants and to serve as a method for "screening out" weaker applicants.

When asked how "demanding" was the development of an LSTA grant application compared with other state, Federal or local grant applications respondents rated LSTA 5.48 out of 7.0. This reflects a relatively high degree of perceived difficulty and reinforces the larger library view the LSTA program is one of "last resort".

This finding is reinforced with Verbatim comments relating to the effectiveness of the LSTA Program (pp 11-12, Verbatim-Telephone Survey). About 15% of respondents said the LSTA grant application was either "not worth it" or they "weren't sure" it was worth the effort because of the difficulty of completing the application.

Additionally, the most often cited "one change" respondents would make to the entire LSTA program would be to create an "easier, less burdensome, application process".

Finally, the majority of respondents believe the process has not gotten easier over the past five years.

Ironically, this technology enhancement Federally funded program is still a paper-and-pencil process requiring the repetitive entry of duplicate data.

Evaluator Grade:
Competitive Grant Application Form/Data Required- D

Grant Application Procedural Issues

The procedures of the LSTA program as developed by the Library of Michigan appear to be largely successful from several standpoints. There is also room for improvement in some areas.

Q24 Admin. burden of competitive grants has diminished over past 5 yrs?
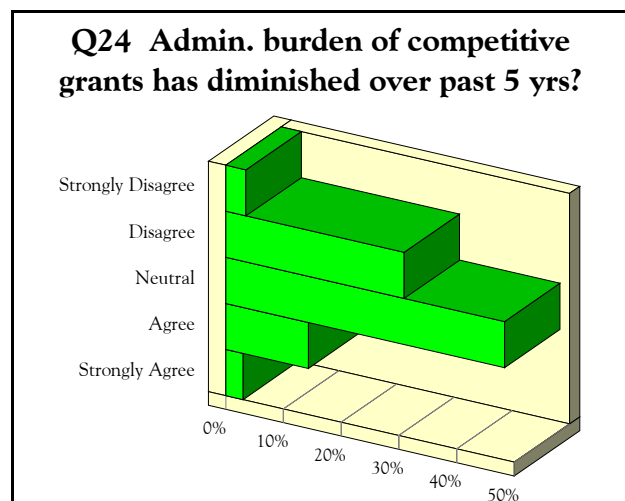
Libraries have become very capable of describing how they meet the eligibility requirements as adopted by the Library of Michigan. The majority of the sixteen proposals included in the Document Review study received very high scores in this category. The applicants also have increased to a high level their ability to write abstracts.

The quality of the submitted applications has continuously gone up between 1998 and

2001. This is based on the overall scores of applications (especially those whose staff attended workshops) included in the Document Review study.
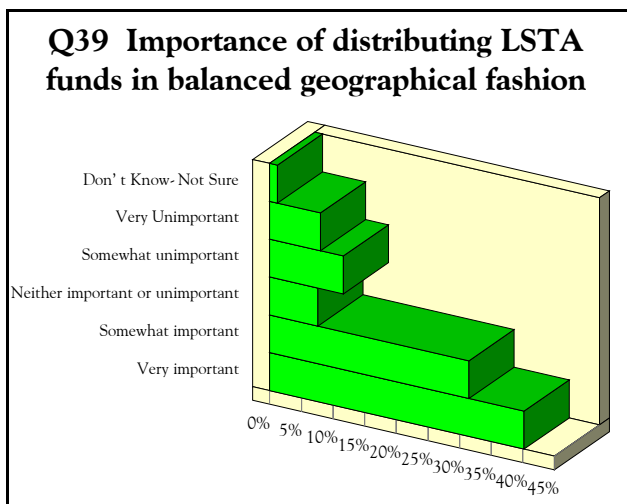
Respondents rate highly Library of Michigan staff who consult with the applicants and respond to questions. As noted earlier, however, those who are unsuccessful in applying for a grant provide lower ratings to the Library of Michigan and staff ratings are also lower among those who are unsuccessful.
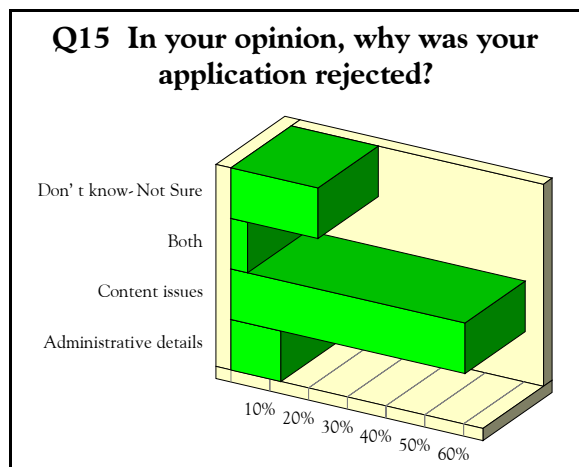
An unstated criteria is that of "geographical distribution" of the grant dollars. A strong majority of respondents support geographical balance in distributing funds but there is confusion over whether that criteria is actually utilized in the fund distribution process.

Evidence in the review of the applications suggests some confusion around what falls within certain funding area boundaries and what does not. The evaluators themselves were surprised at some projects approved given the presumed boundaries of the funding areas. (See Warren Public Library- 1998). If this confusion is widespread (and we believe it is based on applicant staff reluctance to accept loosened funding area criteria) it will make the completion of successful grant applications appear to be more luck than discipline.

The technology plans provided by applicant libraries have been very weak throughout the 5 Year State Plan. In many cases, no plan for technology was in place. It is unclear why libraries have failed to establish technology plans. It is possible applicants believe a technology plan must be complex and complicated. Some library directors may be avoiding the development of such a plan because they may feel it could tie them to a course of action and/or perhaps. . . . be held accountable?

Applicant libraries appear to treat all LSTA requirements as relatively equal. There does not appear to be a sensitivity to the concept some criteria are more important than others. *(For example, there is a requirement for the applicant to relate their proposal to the library's technology plan. Most applicants either have no technology plan or do a very poor job documenting that relationship. There appears to be no penalty for libraries which fail this requirement. Applicants appear to be funded or not funded based on other criteria).*

Q39 Importance of distributing LSTA funds in balanced geographical fashion

Don't Know- Not Sure
Very Unimportant
Somewhat unimportant
Neither important or unimportant
Somewhat important
Very important

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45%

Q15 In your opinion, why was your application rejected?

Nor does the Library of Michigan appear to be making identifiable efforts to clarify the relative weight of the criteria. This has the potential to allow applicants to make unnecessary errors in their applications. Would important criteria be intentionally neglected? This inability to recognize key criteria could result in one or more major criteria violated (i. e. poor or no financial plan or poor or inadequate attempts to demonstrate need or fit within eligibility requirements) .

There appears to be some level of inconsistency or arbitrariness in the application review and approval process. Even within the limits of 16 applications the evaluation team was puzzled regarding the approval of some proposals. (See Warren Public Library- 1998, 1999) While there may be legitimate reasons for the decisions, it would be helpful to understand a clearly defined criteria initially and approvals/ denials more closely linked to those criteria.

A minority of respondents (unsuccessful) don't know why their application was rejected. Although the majority (both in focus groups and in the telephone survey) discussed the ability to understand why their grant request failed with a Library of Michigan staff person, there exists a significant minority who appear to be unaware of who to contact for information or how to go about the procedure of finding out what happened with their grant and why.

Although the number of applicants who are not aware of their application's shortcomings is small, there are a solid number of applicants who apparently know how to find out what was lacking in their application but either do not bother to do so, or fail to remember from one year to the next (See Factors of Unsuccessful Applications- below)

Currently, the Library of Michigan does not automatically send out a form detailing the reasons for an application's rejection. It is incumbent upon the applicant to followup and inquire into the rationale behind the rejection of the grant request. This lack of proactive

communication between the Library of Michigan and grant applicants outlining the cause for rejection may contribute to organizations which repeatedly fail in their application attempt.

12% of applicants who were unsuccessful state it was "administrative"* or non-content criteria that led to the rejection of their proposal. The majority of respondents who are unsuccessful admit the problem was a content-related problem with the application. Based on focus group results, most respondents whose application is rejected for content-related issues do not feel they were treated unfairly in the process.

" Administrative" here means any criteria unrelated to content issues, but related to matters based on form, filling in blank spaces, correct spelling and grammar, providing correct number of copies, etc.

Factors for Success/Rejection
Based on the review of applications there are some key factors for success and key indicators of failure in the grant application process.

<u>Factors of Successful Applications</u>
< Clear demonstration of "need"
< Well-organized
< Clear subheads labeling all necessary elements of application
< Strong appendix with relevant and well-organized supporting documentation
< Completion of all necessary elements of application
< Solid financial review, plan for spending, addressing sustainability
< Proper fit of proposed project into appropriate funding area
< Established history of resource sharing and cooperation with other libraries and/or community agencies
< Clearly-defined relationship between proposed project and library's plan for technology
< Grants applied for in the funding categories of Children in Poverty, Internet Training Center Enhancement and Persons having Difficulty Using a Library are awarded at a higher rate than those applying for other categories of award
< Ability of library to recognize weak areas in previous applications in order to improve future applications (including libraries with successful histories)

While few applications demonstrated high scores in every category, most successful applications revealed high scores in most of these categories. Within these categories, some appear more critical than others (noted in red).

This does not mean, however, there are no exceptions. One library provided a very poor demonstration of need and was funded anyway. (See Document Review-Warren Public Library-1999). Other examples of libraries failing key criteria (but are funded) appear in

the document review analysis.

Factors of Unsuccessful Applications
<   Inadequate demonstration of need
<   Disorganized
<   Weak (or lack of) appendix with inadequate supporting documentation
<   Failure to complete all necessary elements of application
<   Inadequate or unclear financials
<   Inappropriate fit of proposed project into funding area
<   Poorly-established history of resource sharing and cooperation with other libraries and/or community agencies
<   Failure to clearly define relationship between proposed project and library's plan for technology
<   Applying for basic, general or advanced technology grants
<   Inability to recognize weak areas in previous applications, leading to repeat mistakes

Consistent themes in the failed applications have to do with poor organization, lack of demonstration of need, poor financial plan (or, more importantly, no plan for project sustainability after the grant has been expended). An easy to correct error is the failure of libraries to learn from their prior year mistakes. Yet a characteristic of the failed application is the repetition of mistakes from prior year applications.

Evaluator Grade:
Procedural Administration and Diagnostic Responsiveness- C+

Non-Applicants
Early on in the survey work, the lack of awareness among some libraries and the inability to obtain the quota of "aware" public libraries sensitized the evaluation team to the problem of non-applicants. We see this as a problem which will only grow more challenging as the quality of applications grows higher and those libraries applying and succeeding continue to refine their grant application skills.

As identified earlier, the number of unduplicated grant awards is often at 50% or less for each funding year (except for the first year for obvious reasons). This problem, discussed above, poses a similar challenge to non-applicants as it does to applicants who have not succeeded. The odds of succeeding either as a non-applicant applying for the first time or for an applicant whose grant request has been rejected face a similarly high hurdle rate.

The learning point is the combination of either a lack of awareness (of LSTA grant opportunities) or failing to compete and win a grant at some point, coupled with a lack of experience or movement up the learning curve can combine to become a powerful inhibitor to LSTA grant success. With such a disincentive, it may be clear why current non-applicants have little interest in submitting a time-consuming, difficult application request.

Throughout the three different studies, attention was devoted to identifying factors which may influence library interest and ability to compete for a LSTA grant. Of the many factors which have the potential to influence that decision, the most cited and, apparently, most influential factors relating to the decision to apply for an LSTA grant include the following:

Factors Impacting Non-Applications
< Lack of awareness of LSTA, grant program, how to apply, etc.
< Failure to attend an LSTA grant workshop
< Difficulty/time requirement and "hurdle threshold" of the Grant Application Form
< Frustration at non-selection and poor understanding of what was lacking in the application
< Perceived arbitrariness of judges in awarding grants
< Lack of detailed, personal feedback to applicant outlining specific problems and diagnostics for improvement
< Confusion over funding categories, what topics qualify, vagueness over rules, miscellaneous confusion over application process
< Lack of technical or other support available in the completion of the grant application.
< Unclear "vision" of what a successful grant application looks like
< Inability/discomfort with attempts at collaboration/funding matches and other external (to the library) requirements

Q31 Do you feel the change to a broadly defined criteria represents...
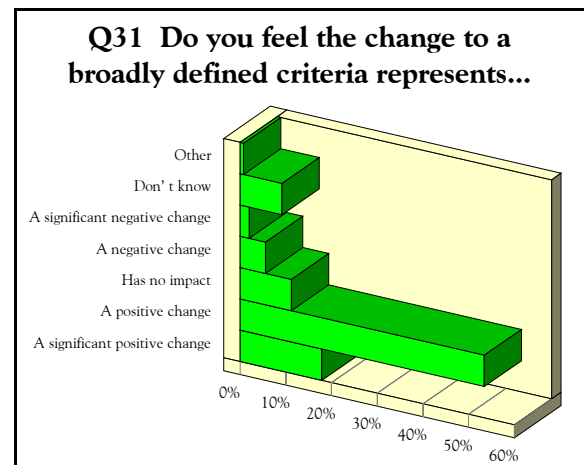
Evaluator Grade:
Library of Michigan Responsiveness to Non-Applicant issues- C-
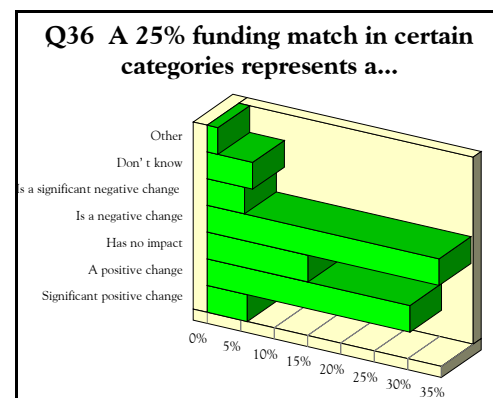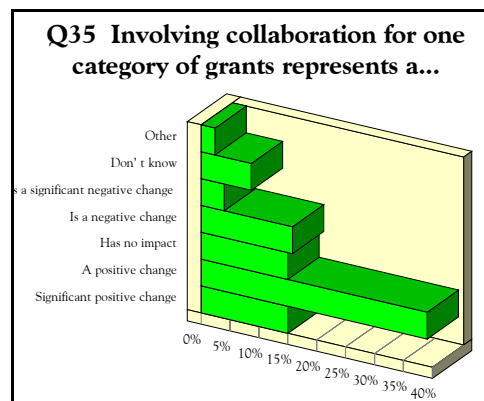
Grant Application Component Modifications
The Library of Michigan has modified the grant application in recent years and respondents have noted and largely approved most of those changes:

< "Broadly defined criteria" or open-ended project boundaries were supported by 70% of respondents but some applicants were concerned the changes prevented them from being able to tell what "the Library of Michigan wanted"

< A funding cap was removed allowing requests for funding of any size project. This was supported by a plurality, but a significant minority objected, in part because of the perception fewer grants would be awarded and their project (which many respondents saw as relatively modest) would have less likelihood (size=importance)
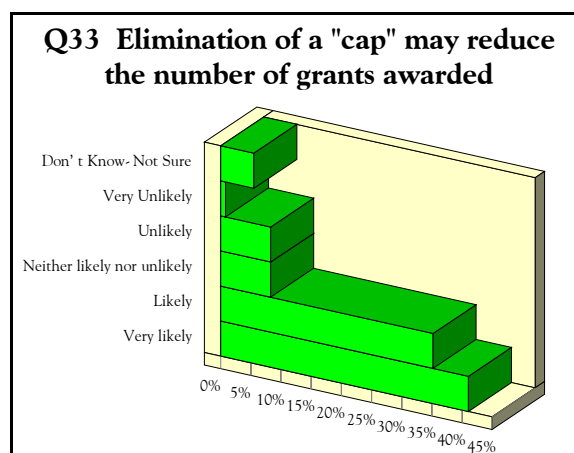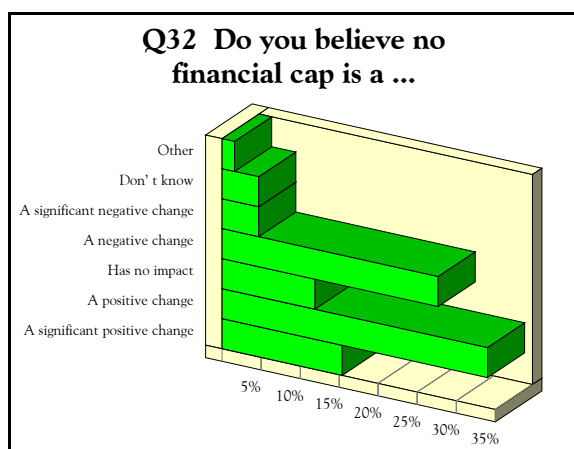
of being approved.

A key concern relating to the elimination of the
funding cap is the widespread belief among library
staff the number of awards would be reduced. This
would occur as a few larger awards reduced the total
number of dollars available.

**Q35 Involving collaboration for one
category of grants represents a...**

**Q36 A 25% funding match in certain
categories represents a...**

< A <u>requirement for collaboration</u> was supported
by a slim majority, with largest libraries most supportive and small libraries least supportive.
Collaboration was seen to add complexity and potential embarrassment to the library should
the project not be approved.

< A <u>25% funding match</u> in some categories received a split vote. Supporters liked
others contributing in a meaningful way but others cited the difficulties created in
bookkeeping, getting other partners to commit dollars, the delay in funding from
the Library of Michigan,

**Q32 Do you believe no
financial cap is a ...**

**Q33 Elimination of a "cap" may reduce
the number of grants awarded**

etc.

<   The "peer review" panel was seen as a benefit to a majority. Supporters liked the
        "real world" involvement of peers and the enhancements to the applications brought
        by the panel. Respondents who served as peers also found participation a benefit in
   understanding the grant process better.

Evaluator Grade: Library of Michigan Effort to Continually Improve Grant Components- B
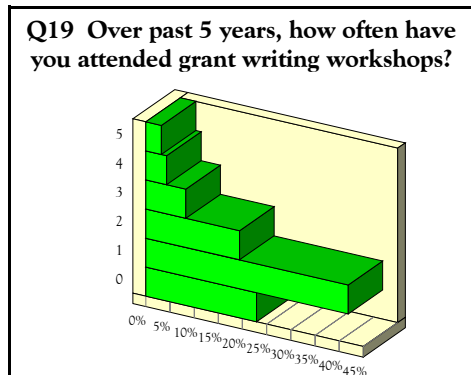
LSTA Workshops

Almost ½ of respondents have attended an LSTA workshop over the past five years. 1/4 have attended two or more workshops. 25% of respondents have never attended any workshop. This suggests the need for attending a workshop as part of the process to be prepared to submit a successful grant application has not been fully communicated to all libraries.
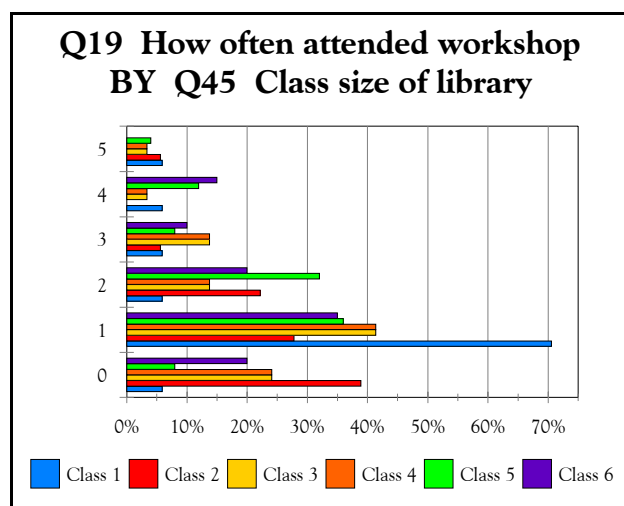
Focus group participants have cited the LSTA workshops as one of the primary reasons for the increased quality and level of competition for the grant funds.

Respondents give LSTA workshops a relatively high score for effectiveness and most scores fall in the 5 or above range (out of a possible 7. 0). 3/4 of respondents indicate the workshop provided information on what was expected and how to submit a grant with the highest likelihood of success.
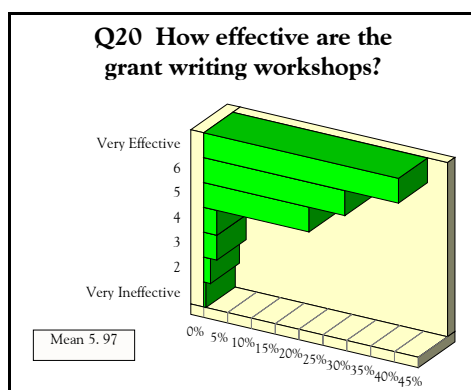
More respondents from large libraries have not attended a workshop than those not attending from small libraries. This suggests the perception may be the LSTA workshop is an elementary workshop not containing advanced information needed by those experienced with grant applications.

Q20 How effective are the grant writing workshops?

Very Effective
6
5
4
3
2
Very Ineffective

Mean 5. 97

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45%

Q19 Over past 5 years, how often have you attended grant writing workshops?

5
4
3
2
1
0

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45%

Page 26 of 35

**Q19 How often attended workshop
BY Q45 Class size of library**

■ Class 1	■ Class 2
■ Class 3	■ Class 4
■ Class 5	■ Class 6

Apparently, those attending one workshop have made a good decision as the highest rate of success regarding an LSTA grant application is linked to attendance at one workshop. Attending more workshops does not appear to increase the odds for success.   However, not attending any workshop does reduce the chance for success.

While the workshops appear to have targeted first-time applicants, there appears to be a significant opportunity for workshops to address problems evidenced in the Document Review section of the evaluation:

<   Some libraries continue to repeat mistakes which have cost them funding approval in prior submissions

<   Some libraries are insensitive to the major "non-starter" issues like financials or need. Everything is not equal.

<   As criteria shift (i. e. funding cap removal) workshops may be used to demonstrate what impact those changes in criteria might look like on applications

<   Funding area boundaries appear to be an ongoing source of confusion.

<   Just because some libraries are funded more often than others, their applications and concepts are not necessarily perfect. These libraries need help also, albeit at a different level.

**Evaluator Grade:
Establishing/Managing LSTA Grant Workshops-B+**

Miscellaneous Grant Program Issues

An issue which developed during the focus group sessions involves the financing of the grants. Respondents in several groups complained about the reimbursement for the grant which, in some cases, does not occur for a long time after the program is implemented. This is due to the reimbursement process and impacts small libraries to a greater extent than larger libraries.

Another issue which has raised concerns is the inclusion of multi-type libraries in the grant funding process. Some concerns are raised over how libraries are compared in the evaluation of the grant application and whether there will now be fewer available grants for public libraries.

Summary of Evaluator Scores:

Statewide Access= A-
Equity of Access= B
Develop Information Skills= C-
Stimulate Innovation and Technical Improvements= B
Overall= B+

Participant satisfaction with LSTA Administration- B+
Library of Michigan Effort to Continually Improve Grant Components- B

Development of AccessMichigan as a Statewide program- A
Administration of AccessMichigan-A
Preparation for AccessMichigan to be mainstreamed - C-
Marketing of AccessMichigan to end-users - D
Overall= B+

Management of Non-Competitive Grants- B

Administration of Competitive Grants- B
Use of Competitive Grants as a Solution- C
Management of Grant Approval Process- C
Competitive Grant Application Form/Data Required- D
Library of Michigan Responsiveness to Non-Applicant issues- C-
Procedural Administration and Diagnostics- C+
Overall=C

Establishing/Managing LSTA Grant Workshops-B+

Overall Evaluator Grade: B

Recommendations

Since only those library staff knowledgeable of the LSTA program were interviewed it was clear from the process of requesting participation by telephone that a number of library staff and (hence) their libraries were not aware of the program and could not participate even though willing to do so. Although this was a distinct minority, the number demonstrated a segment of this population is unaware of the program.

Additionally, of those who were interviewed, respondents were aware, on average, of approximately 2 goals of LSTA. Given LSTA is a statewide initiative managed by the Library of Michigan it is presumed the widest dissemination of program information and goals would be desirable. This is even more important as a lack of awareness serves as a barrier to participation in the program.

We recommend the inclusion of targeted communications and awareness building devices to insure the broadest possible awareness of the LSTA program and its goals. This is especially important as the Library of Michigan is being given credit by those aware of the LSTA program for effective administration of the program. This positive should not be offset by the potential downside of some libraries remaining unaware of the program and non-participative as a result.

The purpose of LSTA is to support technology initiatives as per the published goals. This purpose is a national one with each state implementing the program within its borders. While Michigan librarians have been very supportive of this goal over the past 5 years, (and many still are) there is a minority view emerging which believes that, in their circumstance, the most critical technology challenge has been met and their most critical current library needs today are not incremental improvements in technology but in other areas of the library. It is recognized this may not be true in other parts of Michigan (the majority still support the focus on technology) or in other parts of the country, where a national program to support technology may continue to make sense. But in Michigan the landscape is changing.

The Library of Michigan is encouraged to be sensitive and responsive to this changing landscape. As funds which may be allocated to other purposes are available, consider funding other non-technology areas. This may allow libraries on the technology curve to meet other pressing demands and avoid wasting money by preventing these libraries from going after technology grants which provide marginal return on investment.

The Library of Michigan has been very effective in transforming the technology capabilities of libraries throughout the State. Respondents generally agree the Library of Michigan has been effective in its use of LSTA funds to achieve this goal. Respondents are less likely to

acknowledge the Library of Michigan has achieved other published LSTA goals.
Being capable of achieving a four part goal with limited resources across a large number of libraries within the State is a daunting goal. The Library of Michigan appears to be successful by focusing on selected LSTA goals rather than attempting to dilute resources across too many of the identified goals. The continued identification and pursuit of a single achievable priority goal with a focus of resources may continue to provide a more demonstrable return on investment, prove more manageable and generate higher customer satisfaction than attempting to attack too many goals with limited resources.

The Library of Michigan gets high marks for AccessMichigan as a LSTA statewide program and for providing funds to libraries to accomplish projects which would otherwise never have been accomplished.
The Library of Michigan has successfully identified and established a highly valued resource in the AccessMichigan program. Identifying "next generation" resources like AccessMichigan and providing the resources to build a statewide network of use is a model for future State library initiatives which provide significant benefit for libraries and their customers throughout the State.

The Library of Michigan is commended for fairly distributing funds.
The establishment of a distribution of funds which works to be fair and impartial has established credibility and a reputation for good administration for the Library of Michigan. Future endeavors of funding or program allocation may look to the competitive grant process for guidance on procedures to follow and avoid.

The completion of the grant application process is perceived to be overly burdensome, requiring unnecessary and/ or irrelevant information. It is perceived also to be one which discriminates against smaller libraries due to labor intensiveness and to be, generally, overly rigid and unnecessarily filled with superficially detailed requirements. Consistent with focus group responses, most respondents indicate the LSTA grant application is the "worst" of all grant applications to complete. Larger libraries often suggest LSTA is the last place to go for funding because of the grant application process.
The LSTA grant application process should be streamlined, simplified, with the potential for submitting electronically and with duplicate or redundant information requests minimized or eliminated. Required detail should be reduced to what is genuinely necessary and minimal or no points deducted from the grant application itself due to administrative errors.
Library applicants suggest Library of Michigan staff are very helpful in assisting applicants understand and work through problems, it is also true not every library staff person knows the Library of Michigan staff provide this service.
The culture within the Library of Michigan staff of helpfulness and courtesy should be continued, reinforced, and used as a model throughout libraries in the State.

While respondents award very high preference scores to AccessMichigan, there is little evidence AccessMichigan is fully utilized by end users. In several circumstances the lack of marketing of AccessMichigan was noted as a place to spend additional LSTA funds. **Marketing AccessMichigan is a relevant objective related to LSTA goals. The delivery of AccessMichigan and accessibility to the program is one issue, but if the program provided by LSTA is not utilized by customers then the spending is not fully optimized.**

Although overall distribution of LSTA funds is seen as fair, 1/3 of libraries report a 0-25% success rate with LSTA grant applications. There appears to be a group of libraries that are successful and a larger group that are largely not successful in their efforts to obtain an LSTA grant. The number of unduplicated winners in the competition is less than 50% in two of the four years tracked. 57% of grants go to a library that has already received an LSTA grant. This suggests that first time competitors or those who have never been awarded a grant have an uphill fight. **Extra consideration may need to be provided to those unsuccessful grant applicants or those applying for the first time because of the difficulty of overcoming the "success" hurdle rate. The Library of Michigan may wish to consider special provisions, consulting help or an adjustment to the rules to assist libraries that have never applied, failed after multiple attempts or are otherwise having a difficult time successfully completing a grant application.**

The special population funding areas are receiving extra consideration. This corresponds to a Library of Michigan intent. However, there is the potential for abuse with libraries concentrating modified applications under high success funding areas to qualify without the genuine need or an intent to fulfill the spirit of the grant purpose. **While certain funding areas may be legitimately emphasized, due diligence should insure grants are not awarded on a quota system nor are any standards or quality thresholds compromised in awarding special population grants.**

The LSTA workshops are given high marks and there is a correlation between attending one workshop and grant success. Interestingly, attending more than one workshop does not appear to increase the probability of success. Apparently this fact is known or suspected as the greatest majority of library staff do not attend more than one workshop.
That having been said, numerous library staff suggest attending a workshop does provide updated information regarding the proposal development process and should be attended when a grant application is considered.
Modifications to the LSTA workshop format may encourage more frequent attendance and may encourage those not currently attending to enroll. Changes may include open-entry/exit, modular classes to eliminate the need to repeat fundamental portions of the seminars already experienced by those participating at

an earlier date, identifying sessions for the "experienced" applicant, etc.

Library of Michigan has over the years made modifications to the grants to respond to different strategic needs. Some changes include "more broadly defined criteria", "removal of the funding cap", "collaboration" requirement and a "25% funding match". Generally, these changes have met with at least plurality approval. However, these changes are often accompanied by some confusion, anticipation of a negative consequence (no funding cap means fewer grants), concern over requirements ("I don't know what they *want*"), and criteria which are ill-suited for some libraries (collaboration or 25% funding match in small libraries).

In order to more effectively achieve strategic goals through manipulation of grant criteria, the Library of Michigan may need to engage in extra effort to clearly define theses changes and market them more effectively. Having a specific staff person who is the "expert" on these changes to answer questions and include her/his phone number and e-mail address to encourage inquiries is one solution although many other approaches could be considered as well.

The peer review panel was well received by the majority of respondents. The panel appears to have positively impacted credibility, an understanding among panelists of what really happens "up there", and an improved line of communication between library staff and Library of Michigan staff.

Continue and expand the peer review panel, encouraging a more diverse participant base. Provide financial incentives to help libraries cope with missing staff and work to pull in those who stay at arms-length distance from Library of Michigan or this program.

There is widespread support for "geographical balance" in terms of fund distribution. Respondents are not sure whether it is a policy or not, however, most would support a policy providing geographical balance.

The Library of Michigan should clarify its position on geographical balance of grant funding. The policy may be articulated in a way that reinforces the need for funding quality applications but that geography is a factor in the grant awarding process.

Summary

The Library of Michigan has not been equally effective with all four published LSTA goals and it is likely no one with limited resources could be. It appears the Library of Michigan has largely concentrated on one or two of the four goals (although funds are granted to affect an impact on all four) to good effect.

The Library of Michigan, overall, is doing an effective, successful job in its administration of the LSTA program. Respondents acknowledge a significant

improvement in their place o the technology curve as a result of LSTA funds. Respondents to the survey are generally pleased with many aspects of the program, including AccessMichigan and the competitive grant program. The Library of Michigan staff get high marks for being helpful and responsive to applicants and library staff calling with questions regarding LSTA initiatives.

The Library of Michigan works to provide a fair and equitable distribution of funds and is helping libraries fund projects which would never have been funded any other way. The Library of Michigan is seen as credible and knowledgeable regarding its business. AccessMichigan is seen as a "hit" and respondents want it to keep growing. LSTA workshops are positively viewed and have been well attended in the past.

The Library of Michigan needs to improve awareness of the LSTA program to the number of libraries who are unfamiliar with this program.

While the Library of Michigan may have mandates regarding the kind of programs it may fund, it needs to be sensitive to the growing number of libraries who are on the technology curve and need discretionary grant funding to attack other problems.

The Library of Michigan may need to review their strategy to determine whether a more concentrated strategy on one or two goals (with attendant focus on communications of those selected goals) may be better to both announce and follow, than to provide mixed messages regarding which goals are being pursued.

The Library of Michigan needs to fix its grant application form and to a lesser extent the process. The form should be electronic and much less labor intensive and administratively detailed than it is currently. AccessMichigan is a popular "best kept secret". Funds should be allocated to marketing AccessMichigan before continuing to add to the database or providing other kinds of enhancements.

Those libraries that are successful are more likely to receive additional grants. There are a number of libraries that are not successful regarding LSTA grants through rejected application or through not applying. Either approach has a low probability of success. As long as the Library of Michigan maintains a competitive grant process, the provision of support to low probability success libraries will be important to help insure funds are distributed where needed, not just where good grant writers live.

There appear to be a number of non-applying libraries which for a number of

reasons never attempt to receive a grant. With the identification of factors believed to influence participation, the Library of Michigan has the opportunity to begin addressing those factors as part of an overall communications effort regarding LSTA, its role, goals, benefits of participating in grant competition, etc.

The Library of Michigan is making a good faith effort to support and fund "special populations" grants. The problem is the total number of grants and grantees is still low against the overall population of libraries and too many libraries are not applying for the grants (see above). Also, emphasis by the Library of Michigan in these areas creates very attractive categories which suggests the potential for abuse. Policy considerations may need to be considered to avoid this potential abuse of the system.

Workshop enhancements can make the already successful LSTA workshops even more valuable especially for those who have attended one workshop and don't see the value in additional training.